

Post-War Growth 1946–1957

Fulford's untimely death prompted the wardens to convene a vestry meeting to discuss the matter of a successor. Leon Morris took the chair. A BCA missionary at Minnipa, and at the beginning of his important scholarly career, he was serving at Trinity as interim minister. R.W. Field, rector's warden, explained how the trustees had to submit a recommendation to the governor. He asked for proposals from the meeting which would 'keep the tradition of the Old Church'. The first step was to appoint a member of the vestry to join with the trustees and wardens in scanning the field and making a recommendation: Jack Holt was elected. Two months later another meeting heard their report. They proposed the Revd F.H.B. Dillon, rector of St Paul's, Chatswood, in Sydney. They explained that they had canvassed as many as twenty-four names, taking advice in Adelaide from their acting minister, and in Sydney from the Revd F.O. Hulme-Moir, the Revd W. Gambler and Dr Paul White – also at the beginning of a literary career, as the 'Jungle Doctor'.

F.H.B. Dillon appointed rector

Dillon was their firm choice. Once again, the protestant Irish link was apparent: his father, Pat Dillon is still remembered in Lithgow for his fiery Protestantism. Fred Dillon was described by the Sydney referees as about forty-five, 'definite in his evangelicalism, strong CMS, has a firm character and some balance of judgement, plenty of energy and ability. His wife is one of the best parsons wives over here, and a first rate helpmeet'. They assured their Adelaide enquirers that Dillon would look upon the appointment as 'a missionary task in the evangelical cause', important evidence indeed of the growing self-awareness of that outlook among Anglicans, especially in Sydney. The Dillons had no family. Dillon had been trained at Moore College, made deacon in 1924 and ordained priest a year later. He had already served in South Australia in the Diocese of Willochra, as priest-in-charge of the Far West Mission, based at Ceduna, before going to Tasmania in 1928 as BCA deputationer. Since then he had been rector of several Sydney parishes.¹

Dillon is remembered as a man who stood no nonsense; a man who concentrated on the life of the parish to the exclusion of attendance at diocesan meetings such as synod, even if it was meeting in his own parish hall: there were more important jobs to be done. He gave of himself utterly, little able or perhaps unwilling to delegate. He was a classic representative

of the evangelical clergyman for whom action was all. He brought maturity and experience to the job, and some fixed theological attitudes. Above all, he was determined to build up the congregation by whatever means possible. Neil Bidgood told how on Sunday he would rush about Adelaide's suburbs in his small car collecting parishioners to bring them to Trinity for the morning service. Skip Tonkin, then a recently married man and later chairman of trustees, explained it this way:

He didn't want to have much to do with the diocese, because he felt that if he did he would have to compromise himself ... Trinity was a small congregation [which] he wanted to build up and make them strong.

Growth was indeed to be the theme of the postwar decade. But first, the annual vestry needed to pay tribute to their late leader. The wardens recorded that:

For twenty years Mr Fulford has laboured unceasingly for the Master at Holy Trinity, and has indeed been a true and loving Pastor to his flock. He never spared himself, and like the Master he served, went about doing good.

The twenty-eight people present at the meeting gladly concurred in those remarks. Over the next twelve months or so they set about raising the money for a memorial. At first it was to be a window, which would be installed in the chancel. Eventually it became the more utilitarian and less expensive matter of improved lights in the chancel and the transepts.

Then it was Dillon's turn. Not surprisingly he asked the trustees for help in repairing the rectory, long neglected because of wartime shortages and other priorities in the life of his predecessor. Shortages and rising costs delayed that necessary physical improvement for some time. Indeed, it was the wardens, not the trustees, who paid for the work. Already income had begun to climb – from £711 in 1946 to £905 the next year, so £160 could go on the rectory and £234 to missions.

Parish council established

The thirty-four people present at the 1947 vestry meeting, the largest attendance by far for many years, agreed with a proposal from Dillon that a 'Select Vestry Council', in other words a parish council, be created. It would be made up of the rector, the two wardens plus six men elected by the vestry meeting and three appointed by the rector 'to meet regularly to transact business in the best interests of Trinity'. Jack Murrell, Mr Haskard, C. McMartin, J. Withy, E. Dyke, W. Rowe, H. Watson, C. Cook and A. Blunt were elected or appointed. Its size was later expanded to twelve, of whom eight were elected by the vestry and four appointed by the rector.

While Dillon would have had experience of the well-developed ordinances of the Sydney diocese which prescribed quite firmly the powers and duties of a parish council, such was not the case in Adelaide. As we noticed earlier, the diocese of Adelaide had no formally defined geographic parishes: it was made up under the original consensual compact of independent churches. This arrangement would attract attention again fifty



Fred Dillon, rector 1945–52, with the young and the old. *Trinity Times*.

years later. In addition, whatever the diocesan practices, Trinity was not bound by them since its existence was still defined by the trust deed, which recognised only the trustees and the wardens. By implication, as long as these officers agreed, a parish council could be convened. But it had no independent powers. Neither did the vestry meeting confer any powers upon it (though ‘to transact business’ implied something in that direction), nor did the trustees ever take much formal notice of its existence, except occasionally to receive recommendations from it. It never occurred to them to do so. The whole project was established on the basis of unspoken assumptions. In the first decade of its existence, the council was a monthly business meeting, making detailed decisions and receiving reports on various aspects of the life of the parish. In due course, the flexibility of its charter permitted the creation of wardens’ business committees of various sorts, and as the council grew it evolved into a policy-considering and advice-tendering body, leaving the details and the accounts behind. We shall see how later in the life of the parish the usefulness of the council had come to an end and it was disbanded.

Without following the career of the parish council point by point, we might note that the first meeting was held on 13 May 1947, at which Claude McMartin was appointed secretary. The principal items of business included replacing the copper in the rectory, renewing fencing, and upgrading lighting in the church. In the meantime, at that 1947 vestry meeting, Dillon asked a committee of ladies to look into the state of the choir’s robes, and obtained the agreement of the meeting that the congregation and choir would no longer turn east during the Creed. Many, and obviously Dillon, were uneasy with what they felt were high church associations of that practice, and so the original low church style was reintroduced.

Finances

Of more significance was the parish council’s support of Dillon’s plan for an annual free-will offering appeal which was promoted by a letter to all members of the congregation. By the end of the year the target of £200

Dillon mentioned had been exceeded by £50. It was an early sign of the remarkable financial expansion of the parish. Total income reported to the annual vestry grew steadily: from £905 in 1948 to £2616 in 1952 (Dillon's last year) and to £7275 in 1957 (the year of the next change of leadership). Some of the growth may be explained by the rising cost of living of that post-war decade: the C Series Index of the Bureau of Statistics, reckoned to be a useful guide to the rate of inflation, rose from 1145 in 1946 to 2567 in 1957. But the growth at Trinity far outstripped that 100 per cent increase in the cost of living. To explain that, we can notice, first, the growth in attendances under Dillon's ministry. There was a near-doubling in the number of communicants from about 175 to about 320, with a similar increase (2102 to 3522) in the number of acts of communion. Next, and related to the free-will offering, was an increased level of giving. Members were willing to contribute a greater amount of their money on a regular basis. Some had more to give because wages were rising; others because they were gaining promotions in their jobs in expanding times, and because more white collar people were joining the congregation; but above all because members were taking the call to proportionate giving seriously. Token support was being replaced by realistic participation. This in turn meant money for missions, it meant a better wage for the rector, it meant physical improvements, and in due course it was to mean more staff to minister to the congregation.

To reinforce his financial appeal, Dillon encouraged open, relaxed relationships, with 'Friendly Hours' after the evening service on the fifth Sunday in the month – a cup of tea and refreshments in the parish hall to permit extended conversations. He also encouraged people simply to gather at the front of the church after services and chat. Another step was the introduction of a parish magazine, *Trinity Times*. Most parishes in the diocese had distributed such a publication for more than a generation. The small size of the Trinity congregation had not justified it till now. The first issue appeared in January 1949. There were notes about forthcoming events such as a marriage remembrance service and a harvest thanksgiving. The former could draw on those thousands of marriages that Webb and Fulford had conducted. So did Dillon – about 15 per cent of the diocesan total. Harvest thanksgiving supported the Food for Britain campaign. A quarter of a ton of parcels was sent in 1947–8 and even more in the next two years.

Dillon and the Second Coming

Another aspect of Dillon's ministry signalled in *Trinity Times* was his concern with the Second Coming. In May 1949 Dillon was listed to preach a series for a second time on 'World Prospects and Prophecy', in which the imminence of the Lord's return would be considered. In June 1951 it was 'Things that must shortly come to pass'. Oral memory supports the view that he emphasised this theme of the imminence of Christ's return, and the way in which the present confused times might be interpreted to signal it. The long-remembered joke was about his initials, F.H.B.: surely they stood for Fire, Hell and Brimstone! Such an emphasis introduced urgency into his preaching. The time was short, the opportunity was now, and the alternative for those who rejected the way of salvation was hell

and destruction. These were the recurrent and urgent themes of Dillon's preaching. As Gladys Holt put it, 'he preached on Jesus coming back to Israel ... it got around ... and the church would be packed'. Probably some in the evening congregation were British Israelites, but that didn't deter Dillon from preaching about the signs of the times, and in delivering his message in a stentorian voice, the sign of a robust and commanding personality. It reached his sister, serving as a missionary in China with Deaconess Mary Andrews, who recalled her quoting portions of Dillon's letters in which he commented on some current event and its application to the Second Coming.

This emphasis encouraged the giving of more money for missionary societies which would preach the gospel before Christ's return. More than one-third of total income of the parish was given for such purposes in 1948–9. CMS, with whom Rhoda Watkins and Gordon Chittleborough were still serving, was the principal recipient. It enabled Dillon to call on his parishioners to give generously to free-will offerings which repaired the rectory and provided a new fence on the Morphett Street side in 1948–9. It encouraged men to offer for full-time service: four men (John Weightman, Brian Richardson, John Hawke and Cecil Burgess) went to Moore College for training and then on to missionary or parish work.

Mothers' Union recommenced

It is possible that this increased and ready flow of funds is one of the reasons behind the recommencement of the Mothers' Union, which had been in recess since 1926. With an easing of the financial pressure, the need for the ladies to raise funds by vigorous special efforts declined, so the goals of the Mothers' Union might once more attract attention. This was even more likely, one might think, in the midst of the post-war marriage boom and the growth of the Trinity congregation, which included many young families. To them, the Mothers' Union could have something important to say.

The first meeting of the new branch was held in the rectory on 22 June 1950, with Mrs Dillon in the chair, and Mrs Trixie Murrell, Mrs Warner and Mrs Brecht present.² They decided to meet monthly on Thursdays, at first in the afternoon, but since 1962 in the morning, followed by lunch. At the April 1951 meeting Mrs Dillon spoke on Baptism, or the new birth. She urged her fellow-members that they had to know 'how to help the young people with whom we come into contact, to realise the curse of gambling, drinking and smoking, and to know that the sword of the spirit is the word of God – the Bible. Also we should encourage young people to read good literature and beware of trash'. There were frequent visiting speakers telling of their missionary work, and others who described aspects of social welfare work in Adelaide. There were larger MU gatherings such as the Annual Diocesan Festival to attend at the Cathedral. There were exhortations about the importance of family worship.

When the Dillons left, Audrey Delbridge, the wife of the new rector, followed Mrs Dillon as president of the Mothers' Union branch. She too presented Bible studies to the meetings, for example on 'women in the Bible'. The branch members maintained the evangelical outlook of the parish in expressing their opposition to a proposal for the reservation



The Mothers' Union branch, December 1952. Front row (l. to r.): Mesd. Delbridge (Pres.), Keats, Watkins (?), Bidgood, Warner (Sec.), Blake, Cook, Thompson. Rear (l. to r.): Mesd. obs., Heath, Murrell (Treas.), Wendt (?), Phyl Billinghamurst, Flo Billinghamurst, obs., Evans (?), Whaites, Green.
SLSA SRG 94/A2/125.

of the Sacrament in the Lady Chapel planned for the Cathedral. They declined to contribute to an MU memorial to be installed there. Members were encouraged to attend the annual vestry meeting and to 'take an active part in the working of our church'. There were combined meetings with the Women's Guild, which had continued with its emphasis on fund-raising and practical work for the church, with some overlap of membership. One suspects that newcomers among the women of the congregation joined the Mothers' Union. It was a significant and long-continued ministry among married and older single women at Trinity.

Growing attendances

Still people came: they were not frightened off by Dillon's urgency and his vivid pictures of hell. Average attendances were 72 at 11a.m. and 132 at 7p.m. in 1949, an interesting clue to Dillon's ministry. Many came in the evening to hear his lively preaching after attending their local church – Anglican, Methodist or otherwise – in the morning, making use of the public transport that was available after midday on Sundays, or, increasingly, driving cars. Indeed, the availability of cars in the expanding years of prosperity was the fundamental physical basis which made the continuation and expansion of Trinity possible. Some probably came out of disenchantment with their local congregation. Certainly Dillon used lively, mission-campaign hymns in the evening services, just when some Methodist churches were seeking more refined musical achievement.

Long-established forms of fellowship continued too. The festival tea and concert was held on 16 June 1949:

It coincided with one of those rare periods when no power or lighting restrictions were in force, and so the event passed over without any hitch to mar proceedings.

Such was the way the difficulties of the coal-miners' strike of that winter were dismissed by *Trinity Times*.

The cottage

The trustees and the rector had to think about the immediate future late in 1949 and into 1950, despite Dillon's expectation of the imminent Second Coming: a substantial legacy came into view from the estate of Miss Emma Basham. Having conducted Narma Private Hospital on South Terrace from 1901 to her death in 1949, and never having married, she had left her estate to four Anglican city churches.³ The Trinity trustees, Edward Johnson, Willie Rowe and Jack Murrell (who had replaced Ernest Le Page in 1947), reiterated that they were the appropriate legal entity to whom any legacies should be paid, not the impermanent parish council. They assured the rector this was not to mean they opposed him or the council: indeed they would give 'careful consideration to any recommendation that might be brought forward by him or the Parish Council'.

By late 1951 the dimension of the Basham legacy for Trinity was established as in excess of £3000. It was agreed that about half could be used by the wardens for repairs or improvements, and that the trustees would invest the remainder. The wardens also agreed that they would undertake to contribute £4 per week to Dillon's salary, as a recognition of



Sister Emma Sarah Basham, *courtesy Anne Basham.*

the rising cost of living. It was the beginning of the end of the total responsibility of the trustees for the salary of the rector which they had sustained since the 1920s. As their invested funds had yielded interest, the income had all been paid out to the rector. Without substantial additions to the capital base, that fund was shrinking in real value in the face of rapid inflation and the low rates of return that the trustees were securing on the long-term bonds. Indeed, they converted *down* from 4 per cent to 3.125 per cent at the end of 1950, a remarkable failure to read the pace of the times. But to be fair, when their resources once more grew they made substantial contributions to the salaries of the staff at Trinity, and ensured that the rector in particular was supported by appropriate allowances for such requirements as travel and extended study leave.

Out of these negotiations between the trustees and the parish council emerged the plan to erect a cottage on the grounds once occupied by the old schoolroom, which would be funded by the Basham gift, together with the voluntary labour of parishioners. Many of them, such as Fred Gordon and Neil Bidgood, possessed trade skills. Teams went to Klemzig to get a five ton load of bricks. Among the workers was Fred Dillon, which endeared him to the other men. 'We had to buck in and do it. There was

a wonderful spirit among the men'. The house, when built, would provide accommodation for either a verger or a curate, though for which had not been decided.

Dillon's resignation

On 29 December 1951, Dillon advised the trustees of his resignation from the beginning of May 1952, to become rector of St Clement's, Mosman, a large Sydney parish. He had been in Adelaide for only six years, but his previous pattern of ministry suggested that he thought six or seven years was long enough in one place. It is possible, too, that the pace of change was increasing, and that he thought a younger man might now lead the congregation. So once more the trustees launched a search, turning again for advice to evangelical leaders in Sydney. A special vestry was convened on 22 January and an open debate ensued on three possible candidates: Campbell Begbie, G. King and Graham Delbridge. An exhaustive ballot yielded support for Delbridge, whose name was therefore conveyed to the trustees for the appropriate action.

Dillon left the congregation in good heart. Income was steadily growing, and one-third of it was going to missions (£889 to CMS and BCA in 1951–2). The cottage was well under way. The task of supporting their rector was again being taken over by the congregation. They were also paying for his car and telephone expenses. At that last vestry, Dillon emphasised the thrust of the ministry as he saw it: 'to use the Church, especially Sunday evening services as a Preaching Centre'. That bold, outspoken style, in Dillon's case dominated by his prophetic convictions, had become Trinity's hallmark.

Graham Delbridge

So in May 1952 Graham Delbridge, his wife Audrey and their young family came to occupy the rectory.

Born in 1917, he was thus thirty-five, that magically preferred age for commencing incumbents of Trinity! While training at Moore College, he had served as catechist under Dillon at Croydon, and after his ordination in 1940 he became Dillon's curate. He then served as Youth Director in the Sydney diocese, a key appointment and one which had seen rapid expansion with the powerful support of



Church staff: the Revd F.H.B. Dillon, Mr G.V. Lindquist (verger), and Mr Hardy (organist for more than forty years), 26 April 1952.

Archbishop Mowll of Sydney. Mowll had resisted Delbridge's departure to Adelaide because he had him in line for a senior post in Sydney. But the need and opportunity to develop a ministry among the rising number of young people attending Trinity had been influential in the choice of Delbridge and in his acceptance of the invitation.



Graham Delbridge, pictured on his appointment as bishop of Gippsland.

Delbridge himself found great encouragement in the large attendances at services in the old church, especially on Sunday nights. He vigorously exploited the opportunity of broadcast services, which undoubtedly swelled his 7 p.m. congregations: people who heard him in the morning on the radio came to see him in the evening. His wife Audrey later wrote: 'People from suburban areas who joined us used to say that what brought them along was the enthusiasm and reality of the way Graham conducted the service and preached his sermons'.

Church growth

The men's and women's groups were flourishing, as was the Sunday school, which experienced a 50 per cent increase in enrolments. A Young People's Fellowship was formed too, as Delbridge reported in *Trinity Times* in October 1952. Nor was it long before there had to be two youth groups, as so many had joined. At the 1953 vestry the wardens reported a 25 per cent increase in attendances at services. Bob Oliver recalled: 'He built that church up ... it really started to burn ... it was an alive church.' The wardens also noted that Delbridge had commenced a regular Wednesday night Bible study in the hall, although there are hints that his predecessors also ran such meetings from time to time. The men's society, which had been operating since the 1930s was now an affiliate of the Church of England Men's Society, and there were active youth fellowships. The cottage was dedicated on 21 December 1952. Dr T.C. Hammond, the combative Principal of Moore Theological College in Sydney, preached on 28 December that year, possibly as part of a preaching visit to South Australia for conferences, while the annual free-will offering yielded about £200.⁴ All this was further evidence of expansion.

It was followed by a parish mission in September 1953 led by Howard Guinness, that confident Englishman who was having such a marked ministry in Sydney and among students around Australia. His previous visit to Adelaide in 1935 had led to the establishment of the Evangelical Union at the University of Adelaide. That there was at least one member of the Trinity congregation in the 1980s who was converted during that 1930s visit can serve as a marker for the rising importance of the link between Trinity and the Evangelical Union on the campus of the University of Adelaide. Members of the EU regularly turned to Trinity for Sunday fellowship and supportive teaching and the two-way flow of

support has only grown in significance in subsequent decades. On the 1950s occasion the catch phrase around the parish and the campus was ‘if you’re not for us you’re a Guinness’. The theme was ‘Are you ready for the coming?’ Five hundred people had crowded the church for the final service, including Fred Gordon, for whom it was an important milestone in his Christian pilgrimage.⁵ On the other hand, at least one of Guinness’s sermons, hot against the church of Rome, caused great offence in more ‘Catholic’ circles in the diocese.

So the growth continued. Delbridge stressed to the 1954 vestry meeting that he needed a curate, as attendances at Sunday service had risen to an average of 133 in the morning and well over 200 in the evening. In the meantime he wanted help from parishioners in sick visiting and in taking religious instruction classes in state schools under the arrangements the diocese had worked out after amendments to the Education Act in 1940. Money had become available to replace the church carpets, to install gas heaters, and provide cushions and kneelers for the choir. Money was also being spent on public address systems for the parish hall and the church, further evidence of the larger audiences to whom Delbridge was speaking.

In response to Delbridge’s request, Tom Jones was licensed as a curate to Delbridge from early in 1955. He and his wife Judith moved into the cottage in March 1955. He was paid £500 plus £1 a week towards his travel expenses. Not surprisingly, the rector had also gained the appointment of a part-time secretary to assist him manage his busy schedule.

The 1955 vestry meeting attracted 103 parishioners, the largest attendance up to that time. Delbridge ‘stressed the fact that Trinity is known for its past record and present stand for the teaching and worship of the faith of the Church of England as outlined in the Prayer Book and in accordance with the Scriptures’. It was a confident and consistent claim. Getting the work of the church into tidier form also concerned the rector, never a man to be much concerned with organisation of his own work. The story has often been told that he began planning his sermon as he put his foot on the lowest of the stairs to the pulpit: believe it if you wish! The various organisations were canvassed to remind them of their tasks, and a missionary committee was established to keep before the people ‘our continued responsibility in the mission field’. Delbridge also emphasised the need to minister to the city through radio and the Sunday night services, which were deliberately aimed at outsiders. There was also the task of training members of the congregation in their faith and in how to live it out in their lives. This especially applied to the increasing numbers of young people who were attracted to the church and who participated in the fellowship programs. Delbridge himself inaugurated youth camps in the tradition of his previous work in Sydney, and took groups to the Flinders Ranges, which he loved to visit.

Delbridge’s people-ministry

In this as in all his other areas of ministry, Delbridge had a great gift of relating to people directly. ‘Whether from the pulpit or over percolated coffee (to which he was addicted) he made everyone feel ten feet tall – always assessing a person’s good points and praising them’. As Peter Smith went on:

His ministry was unusually personal. Even if you were one of 300 listening to his sermon, he was speaking to you personally. I doubt if I have detected such a gift in anyone else ... I walked up King William Street with him once. He said 'All these people walking towards us, don't you look at each one and wonder if he or she knows the Lord? He treated everyone as his friend. I don't think he had 'contacts' – only friends – and they all needed to know the Lord.

Skip Tonkin has a 'vivid recollection of the *charisma* of Graham Delbridge ... his way of talking to people, his easy manner of communication ... he was a *warm* person.'

As Smith put it, 'the number of conversions during his short five years here was phenomenal'. The growth in numbers at services proved that beyond doubt. Under Delbridge the character of the congregation changed significantly. The vestiges of a city base all but disappeared, as people came from all over Adelaide, the fastest growing metropolitan area in Australia in the 1950s. To the cautious tradesmen and the city shopkeepers were added increasing numbers of young professionals with their families, of whom Skip Tonkin and Peter Smith were representative. Both men soon joined the parish council, where Peter Smith served till the late 1970s, moving on to become eventually chairman of trustees, and only retiring from parish office in 2010, almost sixty years later. Delbridge spoke their language, appealed to their middle-of-the-road concerns, preached a gospel to which these upwardly mobile middle class people could respond. But, in the last resort, whatever their social position, these were not interested observers or mere supporters of the status quo in a changing city, but men and women who heard and believed.

Necessary administrative changes paralleled this dynamic and personal ministry. There was the need to claim from the church's insurers after the 1955 earthquake. Fortunately the damage was not drastic, although the tears in the wall fabric of church and rectory are still visible, more than sixty years later, and always require maintenance. There was always the fence on Morphett Street: it seemed to attract constant attention for repair, replacement or relocation! With the death of David Hardy on 26 December 1956 after forty years as organist, a fund was opened to replace or upgrade the organ. Ray Kidney, already choirmaster, was soon appointed as Hardy's successor, and by his death in 2010, easily exceeded David Hardy's years of service. In his first year the secretary of the choir, Mrs Schermbrucker, reported eighteen anthems prepared and sung on different occasions, and several radio presentations of Trinity services. There 'were now fourteen boys in the Boys Choir, who now sing at morning and evening services'. They had also made a broadcast over Radio Australia. The adult choir consisted of 15 sopranos, 5 contraltos, 2 tenors and 2 basses. Finally, as one of Ray Kidney's first moves, the choir affiliated with the Royal School of Church Music.⁶ Also during these years Delbridge's salary was revised upwards from time to time, in an attempt to keep pace with inflation, and to recognise his effectiveness. The trustees appear to have paid the rector about £200 during the 1950s, while the wardens gradually increased their contribution from £360 to possibly £800.



A church singalong in the parish hall, 1955, led by Graham Delbridge, here with the new organist and choirmaster, Ray Kidney, at the beginning of fifty-four years' service. All the other faces and heads suggest a youthful audience.



Another marker of the growth of attendance among younger people was the establishment of a tennis club in the mid-1950s which lasted for some decades.

Unlike his predecessor, Delbridge was willing to serve outside the parish. He was elected to the diocesan council. He was willing to share his staff resources to help out when need arose in other parishes. He provided friendly advice to clergy in the diocese. He talked gave an address to the members of the Society of the Sacred Mission at St Michael's House,

Crafers. He thus contributed to an improvement in relationships with representatives of other traditions within Anglicanism in the diocese. ‘He was a great bridge builder’, claimed Peter Smith.

Continuing growth

Along with this, attendances continued to rise: some 25 000 worshippers were recorded during 1955–6, an average of roughly 200 per service, and, once again, an increase of 15 per cent on the previous year. These were heady days. Surprisingly, Delbridge found it necessary to defend himself against criticism of the focus of his ministry. It is evidence that not all members of the congregation were coping with the pace of change. He wrote in *Trinity Times* for June 1956:

It has distressed me considerably to hear of criticisms certain people are making that this church is being ‘turned into’ a young people’s church, and that there is nothing to cater for the needs of older people.

To this his answer was the mid-week bible study, the men’s meetings, the friendly hour, the distribution of *Trinity Times*, prayer meetings, the fair, the Sunday school picnics: the list seems unending and exhausting. Indeed, according to Peter Smith, Delbridge suffered severe illness through exhaustion at this time. It was his wife Audrey who had to tend to him and try to slow him down. Even so, he took out a ThSchol degree while recuperating.

The range of those activities was signalled by a chance conversation: ‘I knew Graham Delbridge ... Yes, I went to his scripture classes at Adelaide High. I was a Methodist, but I preferred to go to Graham’s classes. I used to spend hours talking with Graham in his study. I still have a commentary he gave me.’ Such testimonies as this from Wes Saunders are representative. The official record of the service to farewell him listed people who wished to testify to his ministry from Adelaide Hospital, the Children’s Welfare Department, schools, and people influenced by his radio broadcasts, as well as people who came to his services at Trinity.

Audrey Delbridge had to cope with the unemployed people who tried



Graham Delbridge handing over the Freewill Offering cheque of £1126 to the Hon. Sec. of the Grenfell Memorial Fund, Capt. A.G. Mack, (?1956).
Photo Don Gee.

the front door of the rectory in the hope of money or food. An arrangement with the Salvation Army for meal tickets took some of this strain off her. Like her predecessors she had tales to tell of brides needing help to dress, one at least who had never experienced a bath. The rectory served as a base for visiting BCA staff and other evangelical workers passing through Adelaide. Audrey Delbridge exercised a busy and important ministry of support. Many recalled how busy the rectory became, how accessible the Delbridges were, how generous Graham and Audrey were with their time. One practical expression of support for them came from Mrs O'Brien, licensee of the South Australian Hotel, which then stood on North Terrace opposite Parliament House. Under Delbridge's ministry, she and her family had become 'wonderful parishioners'. She ensured that the Delbridge



Celebrating three clergy on staff in 1956: Tom Jones (1955–57), Graham Delbridge (1952–57), John Brook, 1956–59): 'affectionately known as the three wise monkeys' (Dorothy Gee to Brian Dickey, 2005). *Photo Don Gee.*

family could dine on Sundays at 'the South' whenever they wished. Other members of the congregation rejoiced that their rector could enjoy the fine food of this fine hotel that Louise O'Brien had brought back from ruin and where the elite of Adelaide gathered during the wartime and post-war years. It symbolised for them his public importance.⁷

Delbridge resigns

In February 1957 Delbridge announced his resignation to return to the diocese of Sydney, where he had been appointed rector of Manly and arch-deacon of North Sydney. No longer could he resist the pressing demands of Archbishop Mowll to serve him in a new and expanding field. Delbridge became the first bishop in Wollongong in 1969 and bishop of Gippsland

in 1975. He died in a car accident in 1980. But in 1957 once more the trustees canvassed the question of a successor. The names of Don Begbie, Ray Weir and Lance Shilton were considered. Delbridge strongly urged the appointment of Lance Shilton, the Melbourne man, over the other two, both from Sydney. So did Leon Morris, now vice principal of Ridley Theological College in Melbourne. Perhaps the most telling remarks in his reference to the trustees were: 'He is a man of integrity and a hard worker. He never spares himself ... he is a convinced evangelical, and would carry on your traditions'. The vestry concurred on 18 February 1957, and the Dean, Dr T.T. Reed, who was Administrator of the Diocese while a new bishop was being chosen, was informed by the trustees of their nomination of Lance Shilton. 'One of the greatest crowds in the history of the century-old church' pressed into the building on 28 April for the farewell service and sermon by Delbridge. They spilt into the crossing and up into the chancel, they filled the parish hall. There were 900, possibly 1200, present that night. The next evening Lance Shilton was inducted as Delbridge's successor, with Dr Reed, now the bishop-elect, presiding and preaching. It was the end of a decade of amazing growth, and one which was not to cease. Dillon and Delbridge had not spared themselves as they grasped the opportunities of sharing the gospel, the *Good News* about Jesus Christ, far and wide. Their emphases might have been different, their concerns were the same. Their open concern for people, in a decade when Adelaide was the fastest growing and therefore the most socially fluid city in Australia, was rewarded by overflowing services and constantly expanding budgets. The challenge would be to maintain the momentum, to give structure to it, and to develop the human resources which had so readily flowed into the old city parish to give it new life and identity within the diocese and the city.

1 Vestry meetings, minutes, 11 Dec 1945, 19 Feb 1946.

2 Holy Trinity Mothers' Union, Minute Book #1, listed the members over the next few years as: Mrs F.H.B. Dillon (president), Mrs F.J. Warner (secretary), Mrs J.W. Murrell (treasurer), Mrs C. McMartin, Mrs Cheesman, Mrs E. Whaites, Mrs E. Haynes, Mrs R. Tonkin, Mrs F. Billinghamurst, Mrs Rzezowski, Mrs C. Mitchell, Mrs Keats, Mrs S. Blake, Mrs G. Kirkby, Mrs F.J. Gordon, Mrs A. Wendt, Mrs Yates, Mrs Weightman, Mrs A. Williams, Mrs C. Cook, Mrs Green, Mrs Lindquist, Mrs Delbridge, Mrs Price.

3 The others were St Mary Magdalene, Moore Street, St John, Halifax Street and St Paul, Pulteney Street. Probate issued 14 Oct 1949 (A4812). I am very grateful to Ms Anne Basham, a family member, for supplying the portrait and the details used here. There is no explanation to the omission of St Luke's, Whitmore Square.

4 *Trinity Times*, Dec 1952.

5 *Trinity Times*, Jun 1954.

6 TSS copy of annual report, 1956/7; Certificate of Affiliation with RSCM, 28 Jan 1957.

7 Gibberd, Joyce, 'O'Brien, Louisa (1880–1957)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/obrien-louisa-11276/text20119>, accessed 29 Oct 2012; recollections of Bob Oliver, Fred Gordon (taped).